While enhancement of requirement varied between 7.5% to 30% for selected clothings and general stores items, it varied from 30% to 900% for selected Ammunition items. Ordnance Factories enhanced their production by increase in working hours and re-deployment of manpower. As a result, output of OFs during 1999-2000 increased to Rs. 5400.66 crore as against the initial target of Rs. 4500.28 crore for 1999-2000 set at the beginning of the year registering a growth of 34.20% over the production of the previous year (1998-1999).

China trying to encircle India

5495. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item appearing in the 'Asian Age' dated the 8th April, 2000 captioned "China trying to encircle India"; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction with regard thereto stating the strategic implications in so far as country's security is concerned?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government keep a constant vigil on our borders and monitor all developments having a bearing on our national security. All necessary measures are taken to maintain appropriate defence preparedness.

Defence supplies from France

5496. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during President of India's visit to France, the French Government conveyed its keen interest on the defence supplies to India in a meeting;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a formal proposal in this regard has since been received from Government of France; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and response of Government of India thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) French defence supplies to India are a matter of ongoing cooperation between the two countries and are discussed regularly at different levels including during the recent visit of the President of India to France. The

discussions relate broadly to acquisition/modernisation of defence equipment, maintenance and spares support, etc.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Naval-Exercise in South China Sea

5497. SHRI P PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Navy has drawn up an ambitious plan to exercise a Kilo-class submarine and a maritime reconnaissance aircraft in the South China sea sometime this year;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether the implications of the proposed exercise in India's relationship with the countries bordering South China sea have been considered in all its ramifications?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Naval exercises in the South China Sea involving a Kilo-class submarine and a maritime reconnaissance aircraft have not been planned for this year. However, Indian Naval ships on goodwill visit to friendly foreign countries conduct passage exercises with the Navies of the host countries as a matter of routine. A goodwill visit by the Naval ships including a submarine, to countries of South East Asia and East Asia is planned during September/October 2000. Passage exercises are proposed to be conducted during the goodwill visit. While the submarine may also take part along with the ships in such passage exercises, no maritime reconnaissance aircraft is scheduled to take part in these exercises.

Pak's advancement into Indian Territory

5498. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Pakistan troops relocate guns at Siachin glacier" as appearing in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 25th April, 2000; and

(b) if so, what are Government's reaction thereto and the steps proposed to prevent Pakistan from making further advance into Indian territory?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.